



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



First Human Cases of Eastern Equine Encephalitis in Vermont Confirmed

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BURLINGTON – The first two cases of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) in Vermont have just been confirmed by the Health Department. Both are adults from the Addison and Rutland County area where mosquito pools recently tested positive for EEE and West Nile virus. Both are hospitalized.

Like West Nile virus, EEE is spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. Health and agriculture officials are considering an aerial spraying program for the area. If weather conditions allow, this could be done as early as next week.

“The severe form of EEE is a terrible disease, and we want to take every reasonable action to prevent people from becoming infected,” said Health Commissioner Harry Chen, MD. “These viruses will continue to circulate until the first freeze. Although spraying will help reduce the risk of infection, it’s important that we all take personal precautions to avoid mosquito bites no matter where we live.”

This is the first time EEE has been confirmed in humans in the state. In September 2011, emus were the first and only confirmed cases of EEE to date in animals.

“Mosquito surveillance is limited. Although we’ve detected EEE and West Nile in one area of the state, we want Vermonters to know that these viruses could be circulating anywhere,” said Erica Berl, infectious disease epidemiologist with the Health Department.

People who are infected with EEE can develop two types of illness. One has a sudden onset and is characterized by chills, fever, malaise, joint and muscle pain, and lasts about one to two weeks. The more severe illness affects the central nervous system and causes fever, headache, irritability, restlessness, drowsiness, convulsions and coma. Approximately one-third of people with severe EEE die from the disease.

Most people have no symptoms of West Nile virus. But up to 20 percent of people who become infected have symptoms such as fever, headache and body aches, nausea and vomiting. About one in 150 people infected with West Nile virus will develop severe illness, which can be fatal.

The Health Department reminds Vermonters to avoid mosquito bites:

- Wear long sleeves and pants.
- Avoid being outdoors at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- Get rid of standing water to reduce mosquito breeding habitats.
- Use repellants that are labeled as effective against mosquitoes.
- Install or repair screens on windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out.
- Make sure your horses, emus, llamas and alpacas are vaccinated.
- There is no vaccine for humans.

For more information on EEE and West Nile virus, visit healthvermont.gov. Join us on [Facebook](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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